

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows.

In the Claims:

1. (Original) A method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose by reacting cellulose with an etherification agent, which comprises:

performing a first reaction by adding 0.5-4 moles of an alkali metal hydroxide per 1 mole of cellulose and agitating the mixture,

adding 0.5-3 moles of an alkylene oxide per 1 mole of the cellulose and adding 20-95 wt% of alkyl halide with reference to the total amount of alkyl halide added through the first and second reactions; and

performing a second reaction by adding 1-4 moles of an alkali metal hydroxide per 1 mole of the cellulose,

dispersing the mixture and

then adding 5-80 wt% of an alkyl halide with reference to the total amount of alkyl halide added through the first and second reactions.

2. (Currently amended) The method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose according to Claim 1, wherein said first reaction is performed at 60-110 °C and said second reaction is performed at 70-120 °C, wherein there is a cooling step between the first and second reaction.

3. (Original) The method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose according to Claim 1, wherein said alkylene oxide has 2-5 carbon atoms in the alkylene group.

4. (Original) The method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose according to Claim 1, wherein said alkyl halide has 1-24 carbon atoms in the alkyl group.

5. (Currently amended) The method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose according to Claim 1, wherein the efficiency of ~~said~~ substitution by alkylene oxide is 60-75 %.

6. (Currently amended) The method of preparing hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose according to Claim 1, wherein the efficiency of ~~said~~ substitution by alkyl halide is 60-70 %.
7. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 1.
8. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 2.
9. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 3.
10. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 4.
11. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 5.
12. (Previously presented - withdrawn) Hydroxyalkylalkylcellulose prepared by using a method according to Claim 6.
13. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein
- (a) said first reaction is performed at 60-110 °C and said second reaction is performed at 70-120 °C;
 - (b) said alkylene oxide has 2-5 carbon atoms in the alkylene group and said alkyl halide has 1-24 carbon atoms in the alkyl group; and
 - (c) the degree of alkoxy substitution is 15 - 35% and the degree of hydroxyalkoxy substitution is 2 – 30%.

14. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the first reaction and second reaction results in a hydroxyalkylalkyl cellulose with a purity with an amount of water insoluble ingredients of less than 0.02 wt. %.

15. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein 50-90 wt% of alkyl halide, with reference to the total amount of alkyl halide added through the first and second reactions, is added in the first reaction.

16. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is sodium hydroxide and the alkyl halide is methyl chloride.

17. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the total amount methyl chloride added through the first and second reactions is less than the total amount of sodium hydroxide added through the first and second reactions.